

A HISTORY OF DEVELOPMENT AND OPERATION OF SCHOOLS
IN REPUBLIC COUNTY, KANSAS

by

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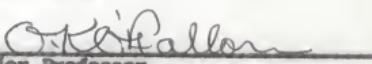
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INTRODUCTION

The problem of education is one which has caused a great deal of controversy among the many citizens of Kansas as well as the citizens in all the states. One may find many articles in magazines, books, pamphlets and any other source of reading material regarding the educational systems found in many public and private schools throughout the United States. Because of the avalanche of criticism which has been launched against public educational systems it was decided to trace the development of school systems in Republic County and identify some of the changes which have appeared in them.

THE PROBLEM

Statement of the problem.

It was the purpose of this study to: (1) trace the history of the schools of Republic County from their first appearance to their present structure; (2) show the changes which have taken place in the number of schools; (3) show changes in school enrollments; (4) identify the amount of money which was allocated to operate the schools; (5) determine the population trend in Republic County; and (6) show number of teachers employed.

Importance of the study. In the past number of years there has been a tremendous amount of literature written about the unification of schools. It was only two years ago that a bill was passed by the legislature which was to make

unification possible in Kansas. Later this bill was declared unconstitutional. Unification of schools legislation passed in 1963 identified the need for a background of school development in Republic County which could be beneficial to those concerned with the development of the unified school plan.

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

In securing a background for Republic County schools, perhaps it would be proper to trace briefly the origin of the school structure on national and state levels.

Public education in the United States took its primary inspiration from the Massachusetts laws of 1642 and 1647, but the public school system in its present form is actually little more than a century old.

Since in New England church and state were, for all practical purposes, merely different aspects of a single unit, it seemed natural that the state should promulgate the first laws governing education. Thus the state, in 1642 and 1647, enacted two laws for the Massachusetts Bay Colony that represented the first state action concerning education on this continent.¹

In a book written by Arthur B. Moehlman he states that

¹Arthur B. Moehlman, School Administration (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1951) p. 22.

at the close of the colonial period four conditions made possible the development of public education in the United States:

1. The English common law concepts of complete parental rights over the education of children had undergone modification in both the Massachusetts and Connecticut colonies.

2. The decentralization of education administration by the Massachusetts laws of 1642 and 1647, and later acts created a precedent for state action in educational affairs.

3. The control of schools by towns developed the concept of local administration of public education as a community enterprise. The civil-school-town emerged from the original bibliocratic civil-church-school-town, and became a firmly established idea in the minds of the people.

4. Liberal education ideas that flooded the continent during the revolutionary period definitely influenced the thoughts of Americans who played an active part not only in the revolutionary period but also in the formation of the government that grew out of the Constitution of 1789.²

As the time passed, the movement of people went steadily westward and as these people established communities, schools were soon to be built. It was while Kansas was yet part of the Nebraska Territory that the first school was established. In an book edited by John D. Bright, the following information regard-

²Ibid., p. 23.

ing the first schools of Kansas was found:

The first free school that had white as well as Indian children was established on July 1, 1844 in Wyandott City (present spelling Wyandotte), now Kansas City. The school was of a frame structure, the first building in Kansas territory that was erected for a schoolhouse. The school was for the Wyandotte Indians and was supported by their money which they had obtained as compensation for their giving up their homes in Chio.

The second free white school was established by the Methodists at Council Grove. An organized class for white children was begun in May, 1851.³

The real beginning of the educational life of Kansas was made at Lawrence about the year 1855. The first school was begun January 16, 1855 by Edward D. Fitch in the back office of a local doctor. There were about 20 scholars, and the teacher was paid by private subscriptions.

In 1857 a territorial superintendent was appointed whose duties were to oversee all of the schools in the territory. This occurred immediately after the legislature came under the control of the Free State men.⁴

As an example of the growth of educational facilities of all kinds, there were chartered in the period from 1855 to

³George Frey, A Century of Education in Kansas (Vol. II of Kansas - The First Century, ed. John D. Bright, 4 vols.; New York: Lewis Historical Publishing Company, Inc., 1936) p. 207.

⁴Frank W. Blackmar, Higher Education in Kansas, United States Bureau of Education, Circular 2 (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1900) p. 17.

1860 eighteen universities and ten colleges. Only three of these 28 institutions survived, but this shows that interest was not lacking in establishing schools of all kinds in Kansas.⁵

It was a number of years later that Republic County was officially located. In I. O. Savage's history of Republic County he states:

The first mention of Republic County is by the Legislature of 1860 which defined its boundaries and gave it a name. It is so called from its relations to the Republican river.

The boundaries of the county are as follows: Commencing at a point where the sixth principal meridian intersects the base line of the state of Kansas; thence south on said sixth principal meridian to the township line between townships four and five, south, thence west with said township line to the range line between ranges five and six; west of the sixth principal meridian; thence north with said range line to the base line of the state of Kansas; thence east on said base line to the place of beginning. These boundaries have never been changed.⁶

It was not too long a time until some of the early settlers became interested in establishing a school in Republic County. The first school of Republic County was organized between March 26 and April 23, 1868. The official description being:

Twenty-one-thirty chains south of NW corner of Sec. 7 from thence 5 chains east to a stone, from thence 2 chains south, thence 5 chains west, thence 2 chains north to place of beginning.⁷

⁵Ibid., p. 21.

⁶I. O. Savage, A History of Republic County, Kansas (Beloit, Kansas: James and Chubbic, Art Printers, 1901) p. 32.

⁷Agnes Talbert, Log Cabin Days Along Salt Creek (Chicago: Adams Press, 1959) p. 38.

The description of the building was similar to many other one room schools of that time. It was a one story building, 18 feet by 24 feet. It was planked up with inch cottonwood lumber and the roof was to be covered with cottonwood shingles.⁸ These few sentences describe the official establishment of public education in Republic County.

In securing information regarding early schools in Kansas, the author found that official reports were not submitted regularly. The earliest bound records in State Department of Public Instruction office were dated 1876. Prior to this time the County Superintendent sent in written reports which resembled a letter. One such report, by E. R. Brown in 1870, gave the following information:

The County Superintendent elect moved away from the county. I did not receive the appointment to fill the vacancy until the 14th of September. Some of the district clerks failed to receive their blanks, consequently our report to the State Superintendent is a little deficient.

Our county is settling up rapidly and by men who understand the value of education. Whenever a sufficient number of children can be found for a school, the men turn out and build a house without tax.

There are three petitions in my office at present for the organization of school districts, and, on the whole, our county bids fair to become one of the foremost for educational advantages.⁹

⁸Ibid.

⁹State Department of Public Instruction, Kansas, Tenth Annual Report: (Topeka: Kansas Publishing House, 1870) p. 100.

In the early days of statehood communities organized districts for operating elementary schools. At the same time the first colleges were opening. The lack of high schools constituted a gap in the Kansas educational picture between the elementary schools and the colleges. At the end of the Civil War there was little conception of the need for publicly supported high schools. The first public high school in Kansas opened in Leavenworth in 1866.¹⁰

Early high schools were organized in the larger cities under the law of 1861 which authorized a graded school in which instruction shall be given in the higher branches of education. These high schools were not free to non-resident pupils. As a result of this many persons did not have access to a free high school. To meet this need a township high school law was enacted in 1881. County high schools were authorized in 1886 but few high schools were created under this act in the early years of school development.¹¹

The information available for study has been limited at times due to a fire in 1939 which destroyed the Republic County courthouse and many of the old records.

¹⁰George Frey, A Century of Education in Kansas (Vol. II of Kansas - The First Century, ed. John D. Bright. 4 vols.; New York: Lewis Historical Publishing Company, Inc., 1956) pp. 224-225.

¹¹Ibid. p. 226.

THE STUDY

School districts organization.

To show the development of the public schools of Republic County ten year intervals were used to illustrate these developments. Both elementary and high school changes were shown together as they paralleled each other for sixty years. The elementary schools originated around 1870, while the secondary schools were not too prominent until the beginning of the twentieth century. Tables showing different growth aspects include both elementary and secondary levels of education.

The development of schools in Republic County was quite rapid as Table I indicates.

TABLE I

NUMBER OF SCHOOLS IN REPUBLIC COUNTY FROM THE
YEARS 1869 - 1878 ¹²

Year	Number of Schools
1869	5
1870	6
1871	50
1872	87
1873	96
1874	100
1875	101
1876	102
1877	104
1878	104

¹²State Department of Public Instruction, Kansas, Eighteenth Annual Report: (Topeka: Kansas Publishing House, 1879) p. 221.

The greatest number of schools organised was between 1870 and 1881 when forty-four new districts came into existence. In the following one year period thirty-seven more schools were added. The increase in number of schools continued for a few more years but at a slower pace.

Table II shows the number of school districts which existed between 1870 and 1960.

TABLE II

NUMBER OF ELEMENTARY AND HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICTS
IN REPUBLIC COUNTY FROM 1870 - 1960¹³

Year	Number of Districts	
	Elementary	High School
1870	6	
1880	104	
1890	123	1
1900	126	5
1910	119	10
1920	119	12
1930	121	11
1940	106	10
1950	53	8
1960	28	8

As indicated in Table II, the largest number of schools organised was between the years 1870 and 1880 when 98 separate districts were organized. In the following ten year period 19 schools were organised. This was the end of the large increases in number of school districts. There was a period of 40 years

¹³Information obtained from records of the State Superintendent of Public Instruction, Topeka, and the records of the County Superintendent, Republic County.

(1890 - 1930) in which the elementary districts remained very stable. High school districts showed their greatest growth during this same period. All high school districts except one was organised during this period. The first Republic County high school was organized in Belleville, Kansas in 1886. It was during the ten year period immediately following 1930 that small country districts began to close. The years from 1940 to 1950 showed a decrease of 48 elementary school districts and two high school districts. In 1950, for the first time since 1870, there were less than 100 districts in the county.

Enrollment and population trends.

Table III was constructed to illustrate the progress of school enrollments during the period of school district organization.

TABLE III

NUMBER OF ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOL ENROLLEES
IN REPUBLIC COUNTY FROM 1870 - 1960 ¹⁴

Year	Number of Enrollees	
	Elementary	High School
1870	183	
1880	3,751	
1890	5,798	
1900	5,478	89
1910	3,996	241
1920	3,272	630
1930	2,723	744
1940	1,678	744
1950	1,398	539
1960	1,380	576

¹⁴Ibid.

In analyzing Table III it can be readily seen that elementary school population increased very rapidly and was related to the increase of school districts. The largest increase was between 1870 and 1880 when 3,568 students were enrolled. The school population kept increasing until 1890 when the high of 5,798 elementary children were enrolled in schools. The number of enrollees was very near the same for approximately twenty years. A decrease in number became evident about 1910. High school enrollment was lowest when elementary enrollment had reached its highest point. It was 40 years before high school enrollments reached their maximum. The ten years 1950 - 1960 indicate that enrollments have remained fairly stable. The primary circumstance which brought about the decrease in grade enrollment was the decrease in population in Republic County. The introduction of the secondary schools may have been a contributing factor.

The Summary Report of the Comprehensive Educational Survey made the following comment on population changes:

The economic development of a state and the characteristics of its population largely determine the number and distribution of the children to be educated. Wide variations in population changes have occurred within the state. Although the state's population grew by 11% since 1950, 42 counties ranged from a loss of 20% in Jewell to a gain of 11% in Johnson. Seventy-two per cent of the population increase was concentrated in four counties, Johnson, Sedgwick, Shawnee, and Wyandotte.¹⁵

¹⁵Summary Report of the Comprehensive Educational Survey of Kansas. Education Committee Kansas Legislative Council, Topeka, May, 1960. p. 47.

Table IV gives the population of Republic County, Kansas from 1870 - 1960.

TABLE IV
POPULATION OF REPUBLIC COUNTY, KANSAS FROM
THE YEARS 1870 - 1960¹⁶

Year	Population
1870	1,281
1880	14,913
1890	19,002
1900	18,248
1910	17,447
1920	15,855
1930	14,749
1940	13,124
1950	11,478
1960*	9,768

*This figure was taken from "The World Almanac, 1962" p. 285.

Table IV indicates that the movement of settlers into Republic County, Kansas became very rapid after the Civil War, with the greatest population increase occurring during the period 1890 - 1900. After those years a steady decline in population has taken place. Republic County now has its lowest population since the period before 1880.

The population decrease relates directly to the decrease in

¹⁶D. Spencer Yoke, Kansas Statistical Base Book, Bureau of Business Research, School of Business, (University of Kansas; May, 1954) p. 87.

number of elementary enrollees, the loss was approximately 76 per cent of that recorded in 1890.

Certification and employment of teachers.

In analyzing any school problem, it is necessary to study the trend in teacher employment. The summary report of the Comprehensive Educational Survey states the following:

Competent, well-educated teachers are the nucleus of a school system. Without good teachers the school cannot do the job for which it was created.

State certification of teachers is a means of assurance that, within reasonable limits, children will be under the direction of competent and qualified teachers. Certification is legal recognition that a teacher has completed a minimum program of preparation to enter the teaching profession. Teacher certification was one of the first services demanded by the public of the state.

It was possible to enter elementary teaching with only a high school diploma until 1948. Then eight semester college credits were established as a minimum for new teachers. These credits were gradually increased until the 60 semester credit minimum was reached in 1952. The minimum of ¹⁷ a college degree for new teachers became effective in 1959.

In writing about certification George Frey made the following statements:

The average teacher had only a common school education and could not instruct beyond the eighth grade. The scarcity of college trained teachers allowed many persons of doubtful educational qualifications to be hired as teachers.¹⁸

¹⁷ Summary Report of the Comprehensive Educational Survey of Kansas, Education Committee Kansas Legislative Council, Topeka, May, 1960. p. 55.

¹⁸ George Frey, A Century of Education in Kansas (Vol. II of Kansas - The First Century, ed. John D. Bright. 4 vols., New York: Lewis Historical Publishing Company, Inc., 1956) p. 209.

Men were favored as teachers because of the problem of discipline, and men teachers were sometimes chosen because of their ability to do manual labor.¹⁹

Certification of teachers was placed with the County Superintendent during the early days of statehood. The time, place, subjects and methods of examination were left to his judgment.²⁰

Tests were given twice yearly and the passing of these tests were the only requirements that one must meet in order to teach in Republic County. As far as could be found, it was not necessary to be a graduate of a high or grade school to be able to qualify to teach.

In a small booklet prepared by the County Superintendent in the year 1894, the following requirements for certificates were given, as shown in Table V:

TABLE V

REQUIREMENTS FOR CERTIFICATES AND DIPLOMAS FOR TEACHING
IN REPUBLIC COUNTY, KANSAS, 1894²¹

Grade of Certificate	Age	Experience	Number of Courses	Minimum	Average
1st	18	12 mo.	12	70	90
2nd	17	3 mo.	10	60	80
3rd	17	-	9	60	75

¹⁹Ibid.

²⁰George Frey, op. cit., p. 216-217.

²¹Records from the County Superintendent, Republic County, Kansas.

In a report of the County Superintendent to the State Department of Public Instruction in 1910 a summary of high school teachers was given as follows: College graduates 2; normal school graduates 1; high school graduates 5; completed one or more years of college 6.

In an article from the Kansas State Historical Society Collections the following is stated about secondary certification:

The separate examining boards were authorized in first and second class cities to have power to issue certificates valid in their respective high schools. In 1907 a board of examiners was created for each county high school. Then, too, with certain exceptions, graduates of the three state institutions, and holders of certificates from the State Board of Education, are authorized to instruct in the secondary schools of the state. Hence, there is no state uniformity in, nor central supervision over, the certification of high school teachers, and therefore standards are decidedly variable.²²

Requirements for secondary certification are further noted by the Comprehensive Educational Survey:

Secondary teachers must be prepared in the subjects they teach. This required subject matter preparation varies with the class of high school. In most subjects 24 semester credits of study in the field is a minimum for teaching in class "A" high schools, and 15 semester credits in junior high schools.

To qualify for administrative positions, the applicant must have had teaching experience, plus a master's degree or its equivalent, with specific graduate preparation for administrative responsibilities.²³

²²Kansas State Historical Society Collection, Secondary Education, (Vol. XI, ed. George Martin. 14 vols., Topeka: State Printing Office, 1910) p. 442.

²³Summary Report of the Comprehensive Educational Survey of Kansas. Education Committee Kansas Legislative Council, Topeka: May, 1960. pp. 55-56.

Table VI gives the number of teachers in Republic County for the years 1876 - 1960.

TABLE VI

NUMBER OF TEACHERS IN ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN REPUBLIC COUNTY, KANSAS FROM 1876 - 1960²⁴

Year	Number of Teachers	
	Elementary	High School
1876	119	
1880	151	
1890	177	1
1900	157	6
1910	139	13
1920	121	34
1930	151	49
1940	120	49
1950	98	38
1960	72	52

The selecting of teachers in many cases was merely getting someone to teach for a period of time regardless of training. Investigation regarding teachers of Republic County identified the number of teachers which was required to fill the different teaching positions throughout the years.

Although the number of grade school students from the highest had decreased around 76 per cent, the per cent of decrease in number of teachers was near to 59 per cent for the same period.

²⁴Information from records of the State Superintendent of Public Instruction, Topeka and the records of the County Superintendent, Republic County.

This indicated that the teachers' load of pupils was lightened.

The pupils per teacher in secondary schools in 1960 was the lowest it has ever been.

In 1930 the total number of teachers reached its highest point when 200 teachers were employed by all the schools in the county. Since that time the total number has been decreasing although high school enrollments have increased.

The picture of pupil-teacher ratio for the period 1876 - 1960 is shown in Table VII.

TABLE VII

THE AVERAGE ELEMENTARY AND HIGH SCHOOL ENROLLMENT PER TEACHER
IN REPUBLIC COUNTY FROM 1876 - 1960

Year	Average Number of Pupils	
	Elementary	High School
1876	22.5	
1880	24.8	
1890	32.8	
1900	34.9	14.8
1910	28.7	18.5
1920	27	18.5
1930	18	15.1
1940	13.9	15.1
1950	14.2	14.2
1960	19.1	11.0

NOTE: The figures in this Table were arrived at by dividing the number of enrollees in Republic County as shown by Table III by the number of teachers as indicated in Table VI.

As Table VII indicates, the heaviest teacher load was from 1890 to 1920. For the next twenty years the trend was toward lowering the average. From 1940 until 1960 there has been

an increase in grade school ratio with the largest being from 1950 - 1960. This increase can be accounted for by the fact that so many rural one-teacher schools have closed as indicated by Table II. Students have been concentrated in schools with two teachers or more.

Secondary education has required more teachers in the schools which has lowered teacher load in the smaller high schools found in Republic County.

School Finance.

The question of money for educational purposes must necessarily be studied. George Frey writes:

Most of the territorial schools were financed on subscription. Sometimes the subscription schools were held in various parent's homes. In one school the fee was one dollar a month for each child. Occasionally schools were built by community effort with volunteer labor. Some teachers were given board and room by various families.²⁵

Public elementary and secondary education is a major business, based upon the amount of money expended. Its financing has become increasingly complex and troublesome. Although the actual school operation is directed by local school districts, the state and federal governments share in the support of the schools. The entire financial operation is not only complex, it is constantly changing.

²⁵George Frey, A Century of Education in Kansas (Vol. II of Kansas - The First Century, ed. John D. Bright. 4 vols. New York; Lewis Historical Publishing Company, Inc., 1956) p. 208.

Table VIII illustrates the changes which have taken place over the years in the salaries of teachers.

TABLE VIII

AVERAGE MONTHLY SALARY FOR ELEMENTARY AND HIGH SCHOOL TEACHERS IN REPUBLIC COUNTY, KANSAS FROM 1876 - 1960 ²⁶

Year	Average Monthly Salary	
	Elementary	High School
1876	\$ 22.50	
1880	25.63	
1890	40.57	
1900	37.57	\$ 49.50
1910	54.20	80.94
1920	60.56	122.00
1930	95.62	183.08
1940	90.22	114.20
1950	217.45	316.20
1960	411.48	472.35

As Table VIII indicates there has been a steady increase in teachers salaries, although this change was very slow over the years. The past twenty years has brought about the most radical changes. The requirements for teaching today are far greater than those listed in Table V. Table VIII also shows that secondary teachers have received better salaries throughout the years than have grade teachers.

Salaries of teachers has been a topic which has been discussed for many years.

²⁶Information obtained from records of the State Superintendent of Public Instruction, Topeka, and the records of the County Superintendent, Republic County, Kansas.

In a report to the State Superintendent of Public Instruction, A. D. Marble made the following statement:

I have, with much labor, opposition, and sacrifice, succeeded in establishing a uniformity of text books in our county. The compensation for our teachers is far too small - for males, \$23.40 per month, and females, \$21.30 per month - and such is likely to be the case so long as fiddlers and saloon keepers are so well paid.²⁷

Although the salaries of Kansas teachers are improving they are not near the top in the ranking with other states. In the Summary Report of the Comprehensive Educational Survey of Kansas, it states:

About three-fourths of the states pay better salaries to teachers than does Kansas. The average salary for all states was \$4,775 or \$637 greater than the average Kansas teacher salary of \$4,138. A 15.3 per cent increase in salaries would be required to bring Kansas up to the average for the country as a whole. Salaries of teachers varied greatly in Kansas. Average salaries for elementary teachers in one-teacher schools was \$3,170, in contrast to \$3,539 for elementary teachers in two-or-more teacher schools, \$3,853 in second class cities, and \$4,705 in first class cities. The average for all elementary teachers was \$3,844.

Average salaries for teachers in high schools varies from \$4,275 in smaller communities to \$4,484 in second class cities, and \$5,284 in first class cities for an over-all average of \$4,485.²⁸

In comparison with those salaries mentioned by the survey, in 1960 Republic County one-teacher schools paid \$3,348 or \$178 more than the state average. The teacher in two-or-more teacher

²⁷ State Department of Public Instruction, Kansas, Fourteenth Annual Report: (Topeka: State Printing Works, 1874) p. 64.

²⁸ Summary Report of the Comprehensive Educational Survey of Kansas, Education Committee Kansas Legislative Council, Topeka, May, 1960. p. 58.

schools received \$3,629 or about \$90 more than the state average. The county fell below the salaries paid by second class and first class cities by a substantial amount. The secondary teachers were paid an average of \$4,288 compared to the state average of \$4,485. ²⁹

Another problem regarding education is the cost to the taxpayer. This was not always the case because in the early history of our school systems, the schools were supported in various manners. In a book by R. Freeman Butts he writes:

The early sources of revenue for American schools were varied and often complicated. In general, schools were supported in two principal ways; (1) direct payment by parents for the education of their children (2) by direct or indirect means that helped to educate other children as well as one's own. The first form was primarily by tuition fees and rate bills. Fees were paid to teachers of dame schools, to parish priests in the South, to private tutors, and to the colleges. Rate bills were of the same general nature except that they represented the fees paid by parents whose children went to town schools, set up by civil authorities.

The second type of support involved a good many methods of indirect help for the education of other children as well as one's own. Individuals gave money, land, or income producing property of various kinds to private schools, to specific charity schools, and to churches for the support of their schools. These gifts, bequests and endowments were put into the operation of the schools to help defray expenses; poor children were often given free or charity education, whereas parents who could afford to pay were charged tuition.³⁰

²⁹Information from the records of the County Superintendent, Republic County, Kansas.

³⁰R. Freeman Butts, A Cultural History of Education (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., 1947) pp. 368-369.

Table IX gives the annual cost of elementary and high school in Republic County.

TABLE IX

ANNUAL COST OF ELEMENTARY AND HIGH SCHOOLS IN
REPUBLIC COUNTY, KANSAS FROM 1870 - 1960 ³¹

Year	Annual Cost	
	Elementary	High School
1870	\$ 858.00	
1880	27,968.11	
1890	71,196.98	
1900	57,712.77	\$ 13,977.00
1910	94,635.53	13,006.00
1920	208,117.01	53,030.00
1930	280,117.01	77,530.12
1940	123,302.37	83,266.16
1950	284,091.26	200,354.88
1960	456,735.11	353,535.43

It can be readily seen that the cost of education has rapidly increased. Even though there are fewer pupils in elementary schools now than in any period of time since 1890, expenditures are at the highest point. Except for the decline during the depression era of the 1930's, schools have become a heavier burden for taxpayers each year. In 1960, Republic County spent \$810,270.54 supporting schools.

Another way to illustrate the increasing cost in financing schools was to find the annual cost per pupil in the grade and

³¹Information from the records of the State Superintendent of Public Instruction and the County Superintendent, Republic County, Kansas.

high schools of Republic County. Table X shows the results.

TABLE X

ANNUAL COST PER STUDENT IN ELEMENTARY AND HIGH SCHOOLS OF
REPUBLIC COUNTY, KANSAS FROM 1870 - 1960 ³²

Year	Annual Cost Per Pupil	
	Elementary	High School
1870	\$ 4.57	
1880	7.45	
1890	12.28	
1900	10.53	\$154.04
1910	23.68	53.96
1920	63.58	84.17
1930	102.87	104.20
1940	73.48	111.91
1950	208.21	371.71
1960	230.96	613.77

The cost per pupil for high schools was quite high to begin with but declined sharply before it increased again. The first year that both grade and high school education cost more than \$100 per student was in 1930. In 1960 it cost an average of \$422.36 for each pupil taught.

Since 1946-47 the operational cost per pupil in Kansas has had an average annual increase of \$14 in elementary schools and \$18 for high schools. There is ample evidence to show that school costs will continue to rise. In 1958-59 the operational cost per pupil in the state of Kansas in elementary schools was \$274, and \$451 in high schools.³³

³²Ibid.

³³Summary Report of the Comprehensive Educational Survey of Kansas, Education Committee Kansas Legislative Council, Topeka, May, 1960. p. 64.

Length of school year.

The length of the school year has varied from the beginning. An indication of how the school year has increased can be seen in Table XI.

TABLE XI

LENGTH OF SCHOOL YEAR IN TERMS OF MONTHS TAUGHT IN
REPUBLIC COUNTY, KANSAS FROM 1870 - 1960 ³⁴

Year	Length of School Year	
	Elementary	High School
1870	3.7 months	
1880	5.4	
1890	6.1	
1900	7.4	8.2
1910	7.6	8.2
1920	8.0	8.6
1930	8.2	8.8
1940	8.4	8.8
1950	8.4	8.9
1960	8.4	8.9

The length of the school year has become quite stable in both grade and high schools. Nine month school terms are the required length of school terms today.

There were numerous reasons for the varying of the school year. This was shown in an article written by George Frey:

School terms were short. They lasted for as long a period as parents could spare their children from home work, which was usually three months a year. Because of the lack of

³⁴Information from the records of the County Superintendent, Republic County, Kansas, and the State Superintendent of Public Instruction.

heating facilities, schools frequently were held in spring and summer.³⁵

Many times when schools were held in sod houses or dug-outs, school had to be suspended when it rained in order for the inside of these structures to dry.

SUMMARY

The study indicates that the development of public schools was very rapid. School district organization was swift to materialize as soon as settlers began to form a permanent type community. The heaviest organization came during the ten year period from 1870 to 1880, when 98 school districts were formed.

School enrollment kept pace with the growth of schools. By 1890 Republic County had over five thousand students enrolled in grade school. Today this number totals less than two thousand students in both elementary and high school.

The most important factor which contributed to the decline in enrollment was the steady decrease in population which began in 1890. From that time until 1960 Republic County population decreased over nine thousand. This decline has nearly cut the number of residents by one-half.

One of the biggest changes was identified in the area of school finance. At first schools were supported by tuition and

³⁵George Frey, A Century of Education in Kansas (Vol. II of Kansas - The First Century, ed. John D. Bright. 4 vols., New York: Lewis Historical Publishing Company, Inc., 1956) p. 208.

gifts to the school. Later it became the responsibility of the local district to provide money through taxation. In 1870 the combined cost of all schools was \$858. In 1960 the total cost was \$810,270. This upward trend shows no sign of stopping as it continued since the depression days of the 1930's. In 1960 it cost \$330.96 for each grade child and \$613.77 for each high school student to attend school in Republic County.

The number of teachers employed by Republic County districts has varied from 72 in 1960 to 177 in 1890 in the elementary schools. High schools employ more teachers today than any previous time. This has brought a pupil-teacher ratio of 11.0 for the country's secondary schools. The grade school ratio is somewhat higher with an average of 19.1 students per teacher.

The salaries paid to teachers showed an increase through the period studied although this increase was very slow until 1950. This trend towards increased salaries continued through 1960. At the present time elementary teachers receive about \$410 a month while high school teachers receive \$472.35. The study indicates that high school teachers have always received larger salaries than elementary teachers, but this difference has been narrowing since 1950.

Schools are more uniform in the length of the school year at the present time. All high schools and elementary schools in graded schools are of 9 month duration. Only the rural grade

schools have an eight month school term.

The trend in Republic County has been one of decline in number of districts since 1940. The population of the county has also been declining, therefore making less districts desirable. Today there are 28 elementary districts and 8 high school districts in the county. Some of these districts are still one-room schools. The closing of these schools is being planned in the future but with no certain course to follow.

Unification of districts would help to bring all of these districts under a few administrative heads, thereby utilizing the schools to their best ability. Money which is being spent at a high cost per pupil could be divided more equally if the students attended centers of education.

In 1960 more money was spent on education in Republic County than at any other time in the schools' history. With the cost of education rising each year, the unification of districts can better serve the needs of the pupils and give better education to the communities.

The selection of teachers with higher qualifications can provide the student with the kind of teacher which is needed in the specific areas that the teacher is qualified to teach.

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A HISTORY OF DEVELOPMENT AND OPERATION OF SCHOOLS
IN REPUBLIC COUNTY, KANSAS

by

MARTIN DALE BOYLES

B. A., Kansas Wesleyan University, 1958

AN ABSTRACT OF A MASTER'S REPORT

submitted in partial fulfillment of the

requirements for the degree

MASTER OF SCIENCE

School of Education

KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY
Manhattan, Kansas

1963

Statement of the problem.

It was the purpose of this study to: (1) trace the history of the schools of Republic County from their first appearance to their present structure; (2) show the changes which have taken place in the number of schools; (3) show changes in school enrollments; (4) identify the amount of money which was allocated to run the schools; (5) determine the population trend in Republic County; and (6) show the number of teachers employed.

Methods and procedures for collecting data.

The information for this study came, in a large part, from the office of the State Superintendent of Public Instruction and from the records of the County Superintendent in Republic County. The information from the County Superintendent, in many cases, was limited as a fire destroyed the courthouse in 1939. Many of the older records in the State Department were incomplete or not submitted at all.

The historical literature of Kansas schools came mostly from library sources at Kansas State University and various publications.

The study.

The organization of school districts in Republic County began in 1868 when the first school was built. The following year four more districts were formed. This same trend followed until there were 131 different districts by 1900. A reduction in the

number of districts began after 1930 then continued until there were 36 districts left in 1960.

This high and low trend was very similar in the enrollment in the schools. The highest enrollment recorded for the schools was in 1890 when a total of 5,796 students were attending the public schools. In 1960 there was a total of 1,956 students. This decrease in enrollment followed a similar decrease in county population. From a high of 19,002 inhabitants in 1890, Republic County had dropped to 9,768 in 1960.

The securing of teachers in the beginning was accomplished without much consideration for qualifications, and this was pointed out pretty well in the salaries they received. The first recorded monthly salary was \$22.50. This was in 1876. Today the average monthly salary for an elementary teacher is \$411.48 in Republic County and secondary teachers receive an average of \$472.35 per month.

Along with the increase in salaries, an increase in total expenditures was found. The amount spent for educational purposes in 1870 was \$858. In 1890, when enrollment was at its highest point, only \$41,196.90 was spent on financing schools. In 1960 this amount had risen to \$310,270.54. Another way of comparing costs was cost per pupil. In 1870 an average of \$4.57 was paid each year to finance a student's education. By 1910 it cost an average of \$38.82. In 1960 it took \$230.96 to support each elementary pupil and \$613.77 for each high school student.

The study shows that costs of education has been going steadily upward even though the number of districts has decreased 71.7 per cent. There are fewer teachers now than formerly but they are receiving better pay and are better qualified.

The unification of districts would bring the various schools under fewer administrative heads and make possible better utilization of qualified teachers which could bring about improvements in instructional procedures. Also, money spent on each pupil could be better utilized.